

the air — with part of a fish in their claws with loud vociferations darting down perhaps 100 yards. They seem proud of their prey.

“9. Seldom take one from the ground when dropped.

“10. Are so voracious that I presume when they have young they devour in 300 nests — two or three fish a day of 2 or 3 lbs. each fish — 7 or 800 fish a day in July & August.

“11. They seem fond of the striped bass which they cross Gardiner’s Bay & Long Island to the Atlantic for. Are not known to refuse any other fish than the one commonly called Toad fish of the ponds.

“12. Are seen frequently crossing Gardiner’s Bay with a stick in their claws, but it is not known whether from an unsuccessful fishing voyage or for the want of such particular stick for their nests.

“Facts communicated by John L. Gardiner.”



NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE WACISSA AND AUCILLA RIVER REGIONS OF FLORIDA.

BY ARTHUR T. WAYNE.

FEBRUARY 9, 1894, I commenced to make observations on the avifauna of the Wacissa River and adjacent country. I selected the village of Waukeenah, in Jefferson County, as a base to work from, which is ten miles south of Monticello, the County seat, and about six miles from the head waters of the Wacissa River.

The country around Waukeenah is high and rolling, and the line of demarcation is so closely drawn, that upon leaving the hill country you pass immediately into the flat woods of the Wacissa. Within a mile of the flat woods the hills are so high that you can see over the forests of the Wacissa, as well as see the smoke from the famous Florida ‘volcano,’ which must be in Jefferson County, near the line of Wakulla County.

The country around Waukeenah is one vast clearing, which is all under cultivation. The Wacissa River presents a different

appearance, as there are no clearings whatever, but simply a wilderness. The length of the Wacissa is about twelve miles. It is very broad for four miles, when it becomes narrower — caused by a chain of islands, which extend some five miles parallel with the river. After the islands cease the river runs through large tracts of saw grass and rushes, and here there is no channel whatever. This spot is known as ‘Hell’s Half-Acre.’ About a mile lower down, the river runs all over the entire country, being one large expanse of water with innumerable little streams which run in every conceivable direction. This particular place is called the ‘Western Sloughs.’ The Wacissa empties into a canal which is five miles long, which was dug before the war with the view of deepening the river and making it navigable. This object, however, was never realized, as the river is very shallow being, on an average, three feet deep. The canal above described joins the Aucilla River and conveys the water into the Aucilla River, and thence into the Gulf of Mexico.

The Wacissa is simply made up of myriads of springs, which are all perfectly clear, as is also the river. The bed of the river is rock from which grows a species of water grass, which being always more or less covered by water, is green throughout the year. The forest of the Wacissa, on the east side, is well nigh impenetrable. This is not due wholly to the dense undergrowth, but to the nature of the soil, which is exceedingly boggy, and, to use the words of the residents, the ground would ‘bog a saddle blanket’!

The west side of the river is little better. While there is some high hammock land it is of small area and consequently harbors very few birds. Bird collecting is very laborious and unprofitable, as the country is simply a wilderness to prospect through.

The timber along the river is not very heavy, and the cypresses all appear to be stunted. The case is entirely different on the ‘Canal Hammock,’ near the Aucilla River, which is very heavily timbered with cypress, water oak, live oak — immense trees — black gum, sweet gum, magnolia, palmetto, etc.

The Wacissa is a ‘snail river’; millions can be seen on the bottom. In May the snails commence to lay their eggs, which they deposit on any available object out of the water, and so

thickly are they stuck on the cypress trees and grasses, that the base of the trees resemble one mass of pink beads.

They have two enemies to contend with, however, in the Everglade Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) and the Limpkin (*Aramus giganteus*), as they destroy thousands of these snails.

The following is a list of birds observed between February 9 and June 15, in the region above described, and about as far as twelve miles from the Gulf, on the Aucilla River. A star indicates that the species breeds.

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| 1. Podilymbus podiceps.* | 34. Bartramia longicauda. |
| 2. Urinator imber. | 35. Actitis macularia. |
| 3. Anhinga anhinga.* | 36. Egialitis vocifera. |
| 4. Phalacrocorax dilophus floridanus.* | 37. Colinus virginianus floridanus.* |
| 5. Anas boschas. | 38. Meleagris gallopavo.* |
| 6. Anas obscura. | 39. Zenaidura macroura.* |
| 7. Anas americana. | 40. Columbigallina passerina terrestris.* |
| 8. Anas carolinensis. | 41. Cathartes aura.* |
| 9. Anas discors. | 42. Catharista atrata.* |
| 10. Dafila acuta. | 43. Elanoides forficatus.* |
| 11. Aix sponsa.* | 44. Ictinia mississippiensis.* |
| 12. Aythya affinis. | 45. Rostrhamus sociabilis. |
| 13. Guara alba.* | 46. Circus hudsonius. |
| 14. Tantalus loculator.* | 47. Accipiter velox. |
| 15. Botaurus lentiginosus. | 48. Accipiter cooperi.* |
| 16. Ardetta exilis.* | 49. Buteo borealis.* |
| 17. Ardea wardi.* | 50. Buteo lineatus.* |
| 18. Ardea egretta.* | 51. Buteo latissimus.* |
| 19. Ardea candidissima.* | 52. Haliaeetus leucocephalus.* |
| 20. Ardea cœrulea.* | 53. Falco peregrinus anatum. |
| 21. Ardea virescens.* | 54. Falco sparverius.* |
| 22. Nycticorax nycticorax nævius.* | 55. Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis.* |
| 23. Nycticorax violaceus.* | 56. Strix pratincola.* |
| 24. Grus mexicana.* | 57. Syrnum nebulosum alleni.* |
| 25. Aramus giganteus.* | 58. Megascops asio floridanus.* |
| 26. Rallus elegans.* | 59. Bubo virginianus.* |
| 27. Porzana carolina. | 60. Coccyzus americanus.* |
| 28. Ionornis martinica.* | 61. Ceryle alcyon. |
| 29. Gallinula galeata.* | 62. Campephilus principalis.* |
| 30. Fulica americana. | 63. Dryobates villosus audubonii.* |
| 31. Philohela minor. | 64. Dryobates pubescens.* |
| 32. Gallinago delicata. | |
| 33. Totanus solitarius. | |

65. *Dryobates borealis*.*
66. *Sphyrapicus varius*.
67. *Ceophloeus pileatus*.*
68. *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*.*
69. *Melanerpes carolinus*.*
70. *Colaptes auratus*.*
71. *Anrostomus carolinensis*.*
72. *Chordeiles virginianus chapmani*.*
73. *Chaetura pelagica*.*
74. *Trochilus colubris*.*
75. *Tyrannus tyrannus*.*
76. *Myiarchus crinitus*.*
77. *Sayornis phæbe*.
78. *Contopus virens*.*
79. *Empidonax acadicus*.*
80. *Cyanocitta cristata florincola*.*
81. *Corvus americanus* (floridanus ?).*
82. *Corvus ossifragus*.*
83. *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.
84. *Molothrus ater*.
85. *Agelaius phœniceus*.*
86. *Sturnella magna*.*
87. *Icterus spurius*.*
88. *Scolecophagus carolinus*.
89. *Quiscalus quiscula aglaeus*.*
90. *Spinus tristis*.
91. *Pooecetes gramineus*.
92. *Ammodramus sandwichensis savanna*.
93. *Ammodramus savannarum passerinus*.
94. *Ammodramus henslowii*.
95. *Ammodramus leconteii*.
96. *Zonotrichia albicollis*.
97. *Spizella socialis*.
98. *Spizella pusilla*.*
99. *Peucaea aestivalis*.*
100. *Peucaea aestivalis bachmanii*.
101. *Melospiza fasciata*.
102. *Melospiza georgiana*.
103. *Passerella iliaca*.
104. *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*.
105. *Pipilo erythrophthalmus alleni*.*
106. *Cardinalis cardinalis*.*
107. *Guiraca carulea*.*
108. *Passerina cyanea*.
109. *Piranga rubra*.*
110. *Progne subis*.*
111. *Chelidon erythrogaster*.
112. *Tachycineta bicolor*.
113. *Clivicola riparia*.
114. *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*.
115. *Ampelis cedrorum*.
116. *Lanius ludovicianus*.*
117. *Vireo olivaceus*.*
118. *Vireo flavifrons*.*
119. *Vireo solitarius*.
120. *Vireo noveboracensis*.*
121. *Mniotilta varia*.
122. *Protonotaria citrea*.*
123. *Helinaia swainsonii*.*
124. *Helminthophila bachmani*.
125. *Helminthophila celata*.
126. *Compsothlypis americana*.*
127. *Dendroica aestiva*.
128. *Dendroica coronata*.
129. *Dendroica striata*.
130. *Dendroica dominica*.*
131. *Dendroica virens*.
132. *Dendroica vigorsii*.*
133. *Dendroica palmarum*.
134. *Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea*.
135. *Dendroica discolor*.
136. *Seiurus aurocapillus*.
137. *Seiurus noveboracensis*.
138. *Geothlypis trichas*.*
139. *Sylvania mitrata*.*
140. *Setophaga ruticilla*.
141. *Anthus pensilvanicus*.
142. *Mimus polyglottos*.*
143. *Galeoscoptes carolinensis*.*
144. *Harporhynchus rufus*.*
145. *Thryothorus ludovicianus*.*
146. *Thryothorus bewickii*.
147. *Troglodytes aëdon*.
148. *Troglodytes hiemalis*.
149. *Cistothorus stellaris*.
150. *Certhia familiaris americana*.

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|---|--------------------------------------|
| 151. <i>Sitta carolinensis atkinsi</i> .* | 157. <i>Polioptila cærulea</i> .* |
| 152. <i>Sitta pusilla</i> .* | 158. <i>Turdus mustelinus</i> .* |
| 153. <i>Parus bicolor</i> .* | 159. <i>Turdus aonalaschkae pal-</i> |
| 154. <i>Parus carolinensis</i> .* | lasii. |
| 155. <i>Regulus satrapa</i> . | 160. <i>Merula migratoria</i> . |
| 156. <i>Regulus calendula</i> . | 161. <i>Sialia sialis</i> .* |

The following remarks upon certain species in the foregoing list will conclude this paper.

Aramus giganteus. LIMPkin.—A common resident, which is locally known as the 'Nigger Boy,' from its cry. I secured six sets of eggs. They nest in saw grass and vines, also small bushes. The highest number of eggs found was seven. This record extends its range considerably.

Rostrhamus sociabilis. EVERGLADE KITE.—It was with much pleasure that I found the 'Snail Hawk' to be exceedingly common. The fishermen on the river told me of a curious hawk which they called the 'Snail Hawk,' when I arrived in February, but added that they had not seen one for a great many years. In the hope of seeing this strange bird, which I supposed must be the Everglade Kite, I prolonged my stay seven weeks. On May 9, an adult female was brought to me. The next day in less than ten minutes I shot four specimens within a mile from the head of the river. I secured about twenty examples and they were all in worn plumage, and also in moult, which makes me believe that the birds do not breed in this region, although Major Bendire, under date of June 23, writes me: "There must be a colony of them breeding within forty or fifty miles of the Wacissa River."

The birds are very tame and unsuspecting. They go in flocks of four to six and are very friendly with each other. Their food consists entirely of a large species of snail, which is to be had in myriads. They obtain the snails by flying over the water—exactly like a Gull—and by seizing them with one foot. They at once alight upon any convenient tree, bush, or drift, and by the bill alone pull the snail from the shell without the slightest injury to the shell whatever. Under their particular feeding spots the shells are piled up until they are from eight to twelve inches high. By dissection, in every case, the female was *browna*, while the male was *slate*. The iris is blood-red—a little blurred. The above record extends the range of this Kite about two hundred miles north, and to within eighteen miles of the Georgia line.

Buteo borealis. RED-TAILED HAWK.—Breeds abundantly in the hill country near Waukeenah, but not observed breeding on the Wacissa.

Buteo latissimus. BROAD-WINGED HAWK.—One of the commonest Hawks found breeding in the hill country and on the Wacissa.

Campephilus principalis. IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER.—This magnificent bird was once very common in this region—a country especially adapted to its wants—where it was in a large measure secure, but it is

now rapidly becoming extinct on the Wacissa. Every one is shot by being systematically followed up. They are shot for food, and the people — the crackers — consider them “better than ducks”! The bill is also prized and many fall victims for that reason.

Helinaia swainsonii. SWAINSON'S WARBLER.—Breeds very abundantly on the Wacissa, but only sparingly in the hill country. The only nest found, which contained three very heavily spotted eggs, was taken May 7, in the hill country.

Helminthophila bachmani. BACHMAN'S WARBLER.—An extremely rare migrant in this region. I secured but eight specimens, of which five were females. All the males taken were shot while singing, which made me suspect they would breed in the hill country, as all the specimens I took on the Suwannee River, with one exception, were silent.

The mystery is where does Bachman's Warbler breed, for it must breed in some of the Southern States.

Thryothorus bewickii. BEWICK'S WREN.—A common winter and early spring resident. This is one of the commonest Wrens, being found along fenced roads. It sings like a Song Sparrow.

NOTE ON THE PAROQUET (*Conurus carolinensis*).—Formerly very common, but it has entirely disappeared from this region now. Mr. E. G. Kilpatrick, of Waukeenah, told me that he saw a flock of these birds alight in the trees in his yard four years ago, but they soon left.

In conclusion I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Edward G. Kilpatrick of Waukeenah, who assisted me in every possible way in securing specimens, and accompanied me through the Wacissa Wilderness.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THREE NEW BIRDS FROM THE ISLAND OF MARGARITA, VENEZUELA.

BY CHARLES W. RICHMOND.

DURING July of the present year Lieut. Wirt Robinson, U. S. A., visited the Island of Margarita on a short collecting trip, and obtained about two hundred specimens, representing all the land birds observed there, except *Polyborus* and the two common Vultures. These specimens were sent to the National Museum for identification, and in a preliminary examination of part of the collection the species here described appear to be new. They